A

Spring

Without

You

Is

Coming

Winter

Dazai pulled his coat around him a little tighter. Kunikida had sent him out on a mission into the frigid cold along with Atsushi despite his unending protests, and eventually he had no choice but to follow orders.

Atsushi sneezed next to him and brought a finger to his nose while smiling sheepishly.

"It's cold today isn't it, Dazai-san? I completely forgot to bring a scarf today too."

Dazai put on an exasperated face and brought up both arms as he shrugged.

"Cold it is indeed Atsushi-kun. But it's not as cold as Kunikida's heart." He shivered as the wind blew past them. "Sending us out on such a day," Dazai continued to whine. "How cruel of him."

Atsushi could only sigh as his mentor continued to complain.

"Honestly Atsushi-kun. This day couldn't get any worse-"

Dazai's voice abruptly cut off as the brunet collided against someone while walking. A petite figure wearing a hat came into the two detectives' line of sight.

Dazai smirked. "Well if it isn't the Port Mafia's smallest executive. You're so short I couldn't see you even with your tacky hat Chuuya."

The brunet expected a flurry of insults to be thrown back at him as he had insulted both Chuuya's height and hat, only to receive nothing in response.

Chuuya stopped for a brief moment and turned his head in Dazai's direction.

Toffee eyes slightly widened as they took in Chuuya's physical appearance. The executive's normally shimmering red hair had lost its sheen and hung limply around his face. Chuuya's blue eyes that normally held the same amount of strength as a fierce ocean storm stared back at him, all trace of his vibrant personality absent.

After exchanging brief eye contact, Chuuya walked away without a word as Dazai let out a small sigh. Atsushi watched the scene unfolding before him in confusion. He looked up at his mentor's face and saw a hint of concern.

"Dazai-san?"

Atsushi's voice pulled Dazai out of his unvoiced thoughts.

"Hm?"

"Is something wrong?"

The brunet put on a cheerful smile and shook his head.

"Not in the least Atsushi-kun."

Stretching, Dazai walked a few steps ahead of the other. "Let's hurry and finish the mission before I completely freeze to death in this weather. I may like suicide, but this kind of pain isn't how I want to go~"

Atsushi tilted his head to the side before chasing after the taller detective. Even after all this time he couldn't fully understand what the mysterious brunet was thinking. He shook his head. After all, it was best to not question Dazai anyway.

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The mission was a relatively simple one, and the two completed it with ease. Though, throughout the mission, Dazai appeared to be lost in his own thoughts and only responded when Atsushi repeatedly called out his name. Atsushi was expecting Dazai to promptly return to the office given how much he had complained about the cold the whole time they had been outdoors.

Much to his surprise, Dazai told him to head back to the office without him.

"I just remembered there's something I need to check up on Atsushi-kun," Dazai explained when the younger one gave him a perplexed look.

"But Dazai-san-'"

The older detective waved him away.

"Better hurry or Kunikida-kun's going to get angry again~"

Atsushi stiffened at the mention of the blonde detective's anger and hurried away to report back to him.

Dazai chuckled as he watched his protégé leave and waited till the younger detective was completely out of sight before proceeding off on his own.

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The sound of knocking against his door broke Chuuya's plans for a quiet afternoon. He groaned and pulled a blanket over his head, hoping the person trying to bother him would take the hint and leave him alone. It was wishful thinking, and yet he tried anyway.

Chuuya soon heard the lock being picked open as the annoying disturbance let himself into the apartment.

"Breaking into other people's homes is against the law, Dazai," he muffled into the blanket, not bothering to uncover his face. "Get out."

"Dazai's cheerful voice rang throughout the emptiness. "That's no way to greet someone who's come to visit you Chuuya~"

"I never asked you to come annoy me Dazai."

He could hear Dazai footsteps drawing closer to him. Not having the energy to deal with the brunet's antics, Chuuya continued to ignore the other's presence.

"Chhhuuuuuuuuyyyyaaaaaaaaa~" Dazai whined in a childish voice over and over again till Chuya finally uncovered himself, unable to ignore his irritation any longer.

"What do you want Dazai," he spat out as he glared at the other.

Dazai smiled at him, still keeping a cheerful mask over his face.

"When was the last time you slept?"

Chuuya's eyes widened at the sudden question before he turned his head away.

"Tch, that's none of your business Dazai."

"Chuuya." Dazai's hands grabbed onto the executive's slender waist and drew him closer, hazelnut eyes silently challenging the other to fight. He knew something was off given the lack of temper in Chuuya's voice as well as the lack of physical abuse against him the minute he managed to break into the redhead's apartment. Though, given Chuuya's tendency to shut Dazai out of his emotions, he wasn't sure Chuuya would willingly open up to him. Somewhere deep instead of himself, Dazai somewhat regretted being the cold, emotionless partner he was during his mafia days. His frosty attitude had resulted in Chuuya clamming up his emotions to the best of his ability whenever it concerned Dazai.

Sapphire ones glared straight back at him in defiance, but Chuuya didn't draw away.

"What?" he questioned, his voice lacking its usual biting tone.
Dazai leaned closer and gently nibbled Chuuya's ear. "Why don't you tell me the truth."

Chuuya huffed, enduring the tickling torture till he finally broke.
"Just one day," he muttered under his breath.

The detective blew into Chuuya's ear causing the redhead to let out a startled gasp. Darkness reminiscent of his mafia days crept into the brunet's lightly colored eyes.

"Liar," Dazai breathed out, lips still centimeters away from Chuuya's ear.

Blushing furiously, the executive pushed Dazai away from him with both hands.

"Okay fine. It's been several days."

The dark tint in Dazai's eyes faded at the honest answer, and he fully drew away.

"Chuuya you really need to sleep more."

The executive let out a deep sigh. "You don't need to tell me that Dazai-"

"In fact, you're sleeping right now"

"Wait, what-"

Chuuya didn't get to finish his thought as Dazai threw the petite executive over his shoulder, ignoring Chuuya's protests and insults, and tossed him not so gently onto the bed.

"Chuuya, if you attempt to get up, I'll tie you to the bed to force you to get some sleep."

Chuuya shot daggers at him. "Always the kinky one, aren't you Dazai?"

The brunet only smiled back and gave Chuuya a quick wink. "Well, Chuuya should know based off first-hand experience~"

The petite executive flushed a shade of red brighter than his hair and pulled the blankets up around him, ultimately burying himself behind the covers.

"Shut up and get out so I can sleep in peace."

The brunet hummed a happy good night and silently left the room.

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Dazai's encounter with Chuuya was soon forgotten as the brunet found more and more work piling up on both himself and the rest of the agency members. Given Chuuya's loyalty and dedication to the mafia, the brunet brushed the encounter aside as a case of overexertion, something that occurred often even before Chuuya was an executive. He wouldn't be surprised if the redhead's habitat had become worse after his increase in responsibilities that came with being an important figure in the mafia.

The intensity of Chuuya's work ethic reminded him of Kunikida's, and a smile stretched out on Dazai's lips as he leaned back on his chair. The two would most likely get long given the amount of suffering Dazai put both of them through. Dazai hummed to himself as he continued leaning back lost in his own thoughts till Atsushi entered the room.

"Dazai-san, it's time to leave."

The brunet sighed and stood up. The mission today involved cooperating with the Port Mafia, and he was dreading having to collaborate with both Akutagawa and Chuuya. He made a sour face. It was going to be a terrible day.

Atsushi gave him a puzzled look. "Dazai-san?"

Dazai cheerfully smiled back at his protégé. "Let's go Atsushi-kun~"

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The two met at the designated point where a cloaked figure was already waiting for them.

"Always the early one, aren't you, Akutagawa," Dazai remarked.

Akutagawa coughed twice before turning around but made no attempt to speak to either of the two detectives.

The strange behavior baffled Dazai. Normally his former protégé would demand Dazai face him in battle to prove his strength and earn acknowledge, or he would be hurling insults at Atsushi.

The bandaged detective's eyes slightly widened. Speaking of insults...

"Where's Chuuya," Dazai questioned. "He was supposed to meet us here as well."

Facing away, Akutagawa muttered his response in a voice so low Dazai strained to hear it.

"Nakahara-san is in the hospital."

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Chuuya groggily blinked eyes and struggled to open them fully. The IV drip placed into his arm as well as the beeping of the heart monitor alerted him that he was currently in the hospital, but no matter how hard to tried to remember, he couldn't recall why he had been admitted. The only thing that came to mind was an overwhelming fatigue that seemed to seep into his bones and the throbbing of his head.

The executive slightly groaned as he attempted to sit up, but decided it wasn't worth the effort and laid back down. Kouyou entered the room, concern marrying her beautiful face, and Chuuya suddenly bolted upright on his bed, ignoring the screaming protest of his muscles.

"Ane-san."

Kouyou motioned for him to relax.

"Chuuya how are you feeling?"

He sunk back into the bed. "Exhausted."

She gave him an understanding smile.

"You haven't been sleeping much have you."

Pale blue eyes darted to Kouyou's face. "Ane-san, how did you know..."

The pink haired executive approached the side of his bed and handed him several papers.

"This came out today", she explained with a solemn face.

Chuuya gave the papers a quick look over before sighing and setting them aside. Kouyou gently pulled him into her arms, bringing the smell of spring and flowers with her. At first Chuuya

protested. He wasn't a child anymore, but after seeing the pain in Kouyou's pink eyes, he realized the embrace was not only to comfort him but also to comfort herself.

Giving into her warmth, Chuuya buried his face into her shoulder like he had so often done as a child and wished that the soothing hand running through his hair would lull him to sleep like it had done so many years ago.

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The news of Chuuya's hospitalization came as a sudden surprise to Dazai since despite his extreme work ethic, the petite executive never had landed himself in the hospital before. Dazai found himself standing in front of Chuuya's apartment as he debated turning around. He wasn't even sure Chuuya had been released yet, but his curiosity and underlying concern caused his bandaged hand to knock on the door. The brunet waited a couple moments, and in the silence, he concluded Chuuya hadn't been released yet and turned to leave when the door opened, revealing a disorganized Chuuya.

The executive ran a hand through his unkempt hair.

"Who is it-"

Chuuya's face instantly turned hostile upon meeting Dazai's eyes.

"Chuu-"

The door slammed shut in his face.

"Chuuya! That's so mean~" he whined from outside and continued to pester the other while counting down the seconds it would take for Chuuya to reopen the door.

Dazai's countdown reached zero and right on cue, Chuuya reappeared.

"What do you want, shitty Dazai?" he mumbled under his breath, the normal bite absent from his voice.

The detective easily slipped past the short executive and entered the apartment much to Chuuya's irritation. Once inside, Dazai reanalyzed Chuuya's physical state and discovered Chuuya had gotten worse over the course of several days.

The redhead ignored him and sat back down in front of the TV. The lack of response to his sudden intrusion slightly concerned Dazai. Normally the fiery tempered executive would have thrown his knife at his face while attempting to kick him out the door, but Chuuya remained motionless on the coach almost as if he couldn't be bothered to deal with the annoying intrusion invading his home.

Dazai searched around the room, looking for anything out of the ordinary, when his eyes fell upon several papers lying on the dinner table.

"Chuuya what's this?"

"Why don't you just read it yourself," Chuuya retorted. "Or has your love of suicide destroyed so many brain cells you've finally lost the ability to read."

A faint smile tugged at the corners of Dazai's lips as the familiarity of their routine returned for a brief moment. Scanning the pieces of paper in his hand quickly, the smile fell from his face as his hazelnut eyes grew larger and larger with every word he read.

"Chuuya this..."

"It's exactly what you think it is Dazai."

The papers from the hospital wrinkled in his hand as Dazai reread the diagnosis.

Nakahara Chuuya

Diagnosis: FFI- fatal familial insomnia.

Dazai was beginning to believe he had miscalculated when Chuuya reluctantly pulled away.

"Do whatever you want Dazai."

"With pleasure Chuuya~"

The detective brought his suitcases into the living room when a roll of bandages was thrown at his face. Surprised, he caught the roll and smiled in Chuuya's direction. Sitting down on the coach, Dazai unraveled the roll of fabric to bandage the injury on his neck.

Chuuya continued to ignore him and shuffled into the bedroom. Feeling the lack of sleep himself, Dazai followed him only to have a pillow thrown against his face with more force than a normal human should be able to muster especially when sleep deprived.

"Get out shitty Dazai. Go sleep on the couch or something."

The brunet peeled the pillow from his face and gingerly touched his nose.

"I see your brute strength hasn't been affected in anyway. You could have broken my nose Chuuya."

Chuuya scoffed. "It's a pity it didn't."

The executive wrapped himself in his blankets when he felt the mattress shift beside him as Dazai crawled under the covers next to him. His multitudes of insults proved to be in vain as they fell upon deaf ears.

"Chuuuyaaaaaaa," Dazai whined as his bandaged arms snaked around Chuuya's petite waist. "The coach is so uncomfortable, and you're so warm."

He nuzzled Chuuya's hair with his nose and felt the redhead give in. Chuuya was too tired to argue with his former partner anymore and sank into Dazai's arms.

"Fine," he grumbled. "But if you try anything funny, I'm kicking you out instantly."

Dazai hummed in agreement and quickly fell asleep, leaving Chuuya with only his thoughts for company.

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The two fell back into the familiar routine they had established many years ago, the only difference being that they no longer headed in the same direction after exiting the building.

"Try not to get caught by the police Chuuya~~" was the farewell that met Chuuya's ears every morning as they parted ways.

"Hah you wish shitty bastard."

The familiarity of the routine both relaxed and terrified Chuuya. He wondered how long Dazai would stay this time before suddenly vanishing again without a word. He pushed the thought from his mind and decided to focus on the time he had with the brunet right now regardless of how short to may end up being.

Despite his attempts, doubt continued to linger in the back of his mind.

Chuuya exhaled and stepped into Mori's office ready to face another day.

"Boss, you summoned me?

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Chuuya entered the apartment after a long day. He rolled back his shoulders in attempts to relieve himself of his exhaustion as well as the tolls of the days. Dazai had already arrived before him and was seated on the coach.

The brunet motioned for Chuya to come over with his hand. Chuuya approached the other, perplexed by the sudden request.

"What do you want, Dazai?"

Dazai patted his lap.
"Sit down Chuuya~"

"Ha? Why would I do such a thing."

Bandaged hands continued to motion him closer. "Just do it Chuuyaaaaaa."

Grumbling, Chuuya sat down with his back towards the detective.

"Now what-"

His thoughts were cut short as he felt a brush gently combing through his hair.

Dazai softly hummed. "This always helps you relax doesn't it Chuuya?"

The brunet pulled Chuuya higher onto his lap and began to undo the tangles from the silky, auburn hair.

"Just relax and close your eyes. You look terrible nowadays. What would ane-san say if she saw you in such a state."

"Tch- mind your own business Dazai," Chuuya retorted but nonetheless leaned into the soothing and comforting sensation.

Dazai often brushed his hair back when they were still known as 'Soukoku'. Nostalgia filled Chuuya as he remembered their early mafia days.
"Oi Dazai."
"What is it Chuuya?"

He slightly paused.

"Do-"

Another pause broke Chuuya's sentence as he debated asking Dazai about how he was doing now that he was free from the Port Mafia. Silence filled the room as Chuuya struggled with needing to know Dazai was doing well and not wishing to confirm his absence in the brunet's life meant little to him.

"Chuuya?"

The redhead sighed as he gave into his concern and need to confirm Dazai's well-being even if the knowledge would cut him to the core.

"Do you enjoy your life at the agency?"

"I'll have to say it's a much livelier place than the Port Mafia at least."
"Are you happy there?"

The soft brushes halted as Dazai took a while to respond.
"I am."

Ignoring the faint ache within him, Chuuya huffed.

"Then why are you wasting your time here? Won't you regret spending your days with a dying person."

The presence of Dazai's hands in his hair left him as the bandages arms wrapped themselves around his waist. Dazai nuzzled the top of Chuuya's head gently.

A quiet response was whispered into his hair.
"I'll never regret spending my days with you Chuuya."

Summer

Spring's warm days gave into the coming summer's heat as it brought the rainy season with it. Chuuya watched the rain splatter onto the windows as the droplets drenched the city beneath them. His increasing forgetfulness and exhaustion prevented him from attending work, and even if he wanted to, Mori had given him an extended leave until he was physically capable of performing the responsibilities he held as an executive. He had been reluctant to leave given how busy things were, but with Kouyou's urging, Chuuya had eventually given in. Now he spent most of his days watching the rain fall while listening to its pattering against the windows. He wished the rain would wash away his fatigue and lull him to sleep.

The gloomy overcast prevented most of the sunlight from breaking into the living room, but a few rays managed to hit Chuuya's sky blue eyes. Shifting around, Chuuya closed his eyes in an attempt to block the intrusion from his face.

It was one of those rare days where Dazai didn't have any tasks at work, not that the brunet would have gone even if he had to. Dazai hated the rain, claiming that the humidity made his hair frizzy and cling onto him which ruined his good looks as well as his chances of obtaining a double suicide with a beautiful maiden.

Chuuya knew better. Dazai's excuse may fool others, but Chuuya knew the real reason why the bandaged detective despised the rain. It had been pouring the day Oda died. The heavy droplets reminded the brunet of his failure causing him to curl up in bed and sleep to avoid his memories. Chuuya knew this better than anyone else.

The redhead dragged his fatigued body into the bedroom where Dazai slept. Seeing his peaceful face struck a chord of envy in Chuuya as he wasn't able to sleep himself to escape reality any longer. He sighed and carefully slipped under the covers besides Dazai to avoid waking him up and brushed away the brown bangs covering his face.

There was no question that Dazai was indeed attractive. His fluffy brown hair that looked soft to the touch along with his twinkling eyes and catching smile made him physically very desirable. Despite their many years together, Chuuya had never really gotten a good look at Dazai's face when he was asleep. Curiosity compelled him to draw a little closer.

The brunet's long lashes nearly touched his cheeks while his chest fell rhythmically with his breathing. His bandages were slightly loose and were beginning to unravel from his neck and arms, revealing the pale skin beneath it. Chuuya never understood the purpose behind Dazai wrapping himself up like a mummy. It would probably be one of those things he never would understand given Dazai's secretive nature when it came to himself. Chuuya wondered how they even made it this far together.

Dazai stirred in his sleep and rolled over onto his back. Pushing the brunet's wavy bangs out of his face once more, Chuuya softly laughed at Dazai's childlike face when his eyes drifted towards the window. Pale blue eyes slowly widened.
"Dazai!"

Chuuya shook the sleeping figure.

"Dazai wake up."

"Mrgh??"

Dazai groggily rubbed his eyes as he sat up. Yawning he turned towards the other.

"What's wrong Chuuya?"

Chuuya pointed towards the window.

"Dazai, look. It's snowing."

The brunet blinked in confusion. "Chuuya what. It's the middle of summer."

Given Chuuya's persistent claims of snow, Dazai looked in the direction Chuuya was pointing.

Grey skies with a cloudy overcast greeted him as rain fell from the heavens as he was expecting. Not a single flake of snow in sight. He ran a hand through his hair, still confused as to why Chuya would wake up him when snow during the summer was unheard of. The executive should know it was impossible for the frozen water to fall given summer's heat.

He looked outside the window then back to Chuuya. A mix of confusion and wonder lit up his sapphire eyes as Dazai's heart slightly sank. In his sleep deprived state, the pouring rain mixed with the cloudy sky gave off the illusion of white snow scattering from the heavens to coat the waiting city in a blanket of white. The pounding of the droplets against the window should have alerted Chuuya that it was indeed rain not snow, but after seeing the executive's face, Dazai couldn't bring himself to tell Chuuya the truth. A list of the symptoms Chuuya would experience given his growing insomnia echoed in the back of his head when a voice pulled him out of his thoughts.

"Dazai let's go out. We haven't been out in the snow since we were kids."

The request brought panic into Dazai's mind.

"Ah Chuuya~ if we go out, you'll end up with a fever given that terrible immune system of yours."

A pillow was chucked at his face taking his breath away.

"Shut your mouth. That was one time when we were like nine."

"Ehhh, but Chuuya still looks the same as he did when he was nine."

"SHUT-"

Laughter filled the room as Chuuya slowly forgot about wishing to see the snow as Dazai continued to tease him. Relief flooded into him. He didn't want to see pain flickering in Chuuya's already worn out eyes.

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Ever since that one gloomy summer day, Chuuya mentioned seeing snow almost every evening, always stating it was the oddest thing he'd ever experienced during the summer. Dazai could only nod in agreement, unable to bring himself to tell Chuuya the truth.

'As long as it's not hurting him, I don't' see why not ,' Dazai thought as he watched Chuuya sit in front of the window, glass of wine in hand. Chuuya spent most of his days sitting on the couch clearly exhausted but unable to give into his body's desire to sleep. The redhead always greeted him from the living when Dazai returned even during ungodly hours of the morning.

Dazai walked into the apartment expecting to find Chuuya sitting on the couch like always.

"Chuuya I'm back-"

A sudden burst of movement caught his eye as Chuuya threw himself at Dazai.

"Aww Chuuyaaa~ Did you miss me that much?" he jokingly teased, bracing himself for the insults that were sure to follow.

Instead, Chuuya clung onto him trembling like a leaf.

"Chuuya?" The executive's odd behavior perplexed Dazai as he lifted Chuuya's face towards his.

Soft eyes questioned him. "What happened."

Chuuya let out a shaky breath.

"Corruption...Dazai...Corruption..." His voice fell to a whisper. "Corruption's standing right there. It's just standing there without a word smiling. Dazai...Dazai..There's....There's so much blood drinking down from it. From its empty hollow eye sockets, its nose, its peeling skin revealing the rotting muscle beneath. Dazai-"

"Chuuya calm down."

Chuuya shook his head. "Dazai...it...it looks terrifying." His voice fell even lower. "Do I really look like that when I use it? Blood dripping down from my hands, eyes and mouth with just the whites of my teeth showing as my lips pull into an insane smile."

The grip on Dazai's clothes tightened. "Dazai...Corruption's-"

A bandaged hand grabbed Chuuya's cheeks forcing his pale blue eyes to meet Dazai's.

Autumn

Summer's golden hues slowly crept into the leaves as autumn made its presence known. As the months progressed, Chuuya deteriorated faster and faster as he rapidly lost weight rendering him always fatigued and barely able to speak.

Dazai wrapped his scarf around his neck a bit tighter, protecting it from the wind's bite. He couldn't afford to get sick, not with Chuuya already so physically weak. The executive's insomnia had progressively gotten worse to the point Chuuya was unable to sleep at all. Dazai bit down on his lip in frustration. He had gone to Yosano for information about Chuuya's condition only to return with what he already knew. She told him the only thing he was able to do for Chuuya now was to keep him as comfortable as possible.

The brunet felt his frustration rise up as he reflected on his own helplessness. Regardless of what life had thrown at him, he always managed to find solutions with ease. However, Dazai found his hands tied behind his back, unable to do anything but watch as sleep deprivation slowly consumed Chuuya both physically and mentally.

Dazai opened the door to the apartment. "Chuuya, I'm home~"

False cheer echoed through the room, and Dazai cringed at the sound of his own voice.

Slowly blinking open his eyes, Chuuya greeted him from the living room.
"..wel..come b..back, Dazai."

The brunet walked over to Chuuya's side and sat down. Taking Chuuya's cold hand into his own, Dazai rested his head against Chuuya's, asking the same question he asked every day.

"How are you feeling?"

Chuuya shifted his head to meet Dazai's eyes. Exhaustion laced his normally sparkling sapphire eyes. The executive rested back against Dazai's shoulder before whispering out his response.

"Tired."

The detective could only bring an arm around the other's head, drawing him closer and silently comforting him the best that he could.

The two sat in silence as Dazai was preoccupied with his thoughts and Chuuya his own.

The first to break the quiet atmosphere surrounding them was Chuuya.

"D-azai?"

"Hm?" He hummed in response.

Soft hair tickled Dazai's cheek as Chuuay turned to face him.

"I.. I w-want to se-e the sun..set."

Toffee eyes widened at the request.

"Chuuya do you think you're up for it?"

Dazai couldn't help the concern laced in his voice even though he knew the other would notice. Chuuya's rapid weight loss accompanied by his inability to sleep had weakened him to such a degree Dazai worried a strong gust of wind would knock the petite executive over like a delicate paper doll.

Chuuya merely scoffed at Dazai's doubt. "Of cour-se I a-am. I w-wouldn't sug..gest it if I wasn't. Besides..." Chuuya gave Dazai a tired smile. "If i-it gets to b-be too much... you'll c-carry me won't you Da...zai?"

The brunet chuckled. "Of course Chuuya."

Dazai unwrapped himself from Chuuya's side and proceeded to grab their coats. He had originally reached for Chuuya's signature black coat but remembered the biting wind and grabbed a thicker coat of his own.

He threw the cloth in Chuuya's direction, ignoring the complaints about horrible fashion sense.

"My sense of fashion is much better than yours Chuuya," Dazai retorted as he approached the executive with a scarf in hand. The brunet wrapped the soft grey fabric around Chuuya's neck, once, twice, as sapphire eyes watched him without protest.

Winter

The soft "thank you" spoken in the midst of the quiet autumn night was the last time Dazai heard Chuuya's voice. As the days grew shorter and colder, Chuuya's voice became weaker and weaker till it finally disappeared altogether.

Dazai spent most of his days in silence, performing his daily tasks without the other's company. Chuuya's body eventually grew to reject food all together which only added to his rapid weight loss. The detective often ate alone in the living room while searching for news about Chuuya's illness in hopes that a cure had been discovered. Nothing new ever appeared. He knew it was futile to keep hoping, to keep longing for a miracle, and yet, Dazai couldn't bring himself to give up completely. Not when it came to Chuuya.

Dazai made his way towards the curled-up figure on the couch. Having lost his ability to walk in addition to his speech, Chuuya's sole method of communication lay within gentle touches and soft gazes leaving it up to Dazai to interpret his thoughts. Luckily, all those years spent together proved not in vain as Dazai managed to understand Chuuya's thoughts as clearly as if they were his own.

He picked up a beautifully embroidered quilt that had been tossed over to the side and wrapped the soft fabric around Chuuya's body.

"You know better than to not use the quilt ane-san made for you," Dazai gently teased as Chuuya's tired eyes glared at him with as much bite he could put into them.

The quilt depicted two birds the same shade as Chuuya's eyes perched upon a branch while snow gently fell around them. The scene was a simple one, but with Kouyou's elegant technique, the longer Dazai stared, the more it seemed as if the birds were about to take flight any minute.

Chuuya kept his eyes closed, ignoring Dazai as the brunet drew the quilt higher up onto Chuuya's form, covering his mouth in the process.

"Weren't you cold anyway Chuuya?"

Dazai was no stranger to the silence that greeted his question, and yet, he couldn't help but feel a slight tug in the bottom of his heart. As much as he would never admit it, he missed the sound of Chuuya's voice, whether it was spouting insults nonstop or just simply calling his name.

The executive wearily opened his eyes and blinked his thanks before burying his face back into the soft covers. The dark bags under Chuuya's eyes, sunken in cheekbones, and pale face only served as painful reminders of the redhead's exhaustion.

Dazai gently pulled the quilt over himself as he settled beside Chuuya. He received another look, but the softness in Chuuya's normally piercing eyes betrayed his inner thoughts. The brunet smiled as he drew closer to the other, feeling the weight of the quilt covering them both.

The two sat in silence with only the snow gently falling outside as company.

Ever slowly, Chuuya leaned his body against Dazai's shoulder, a gesture he often did during his sleepless nights when Dazai was still a part of the Port Mafia. In response, the brunet reached over and gently held Chuuya's hand. He felt the redhead's fingers twitch at the unexpected contact and couldn't help but sadly smile at the action. Even though Chuuya was unable to walk, he still reached Dazai's touch.

At this point, it was the little things that mattered the most.

Being in such close proximity to the exhausted executive, Dazai could make out the gentle rise and fall of Chuuya's chest moving in time with each breath. He squeezed Chuuya's hand ever so slightly. Chuuya was always the warmer of the two and the brunet often used Chuuya has a personal heater given the other's short stature made it perfect to cuddle him under his chin when sleeping. But now, Chuuya felt too cool to the touch, and Dazai found himself pulling the executive even closer in attempts to share his body heat.

When met with a questioning gaze, the detective took the opportunity to speak instead of explaining himself.

"Hey Chuuya, did you know that if you hold hands while sleeping, you'll have the same dream?"

Amber eyes stared off at the falling snow before them almost as if the statement was for Dazai to hear alone. The barely noticeable squeeze against his palm was the only response he needed to know Chuuya had heard him as well as the thoughts he couldn't bring himself to say.

As comfortable as he was, Dazai knew Chuuya preferred to not remain seated on the couch for extended periods of time, and the ticking of the time alerted him just how late into the night it was. The brunet untangled his hand from the other and slipped out from beneath the quilt.

Without a word, Dazai gently picked up Chuuya's fragile form along with the quilt and brought them into the bedroom. Normally Chuuya would put up a fight claiming he could move around just fine without help, but he didn't protest and simply closed his eyes and sank into Dazai's arms.

After setting Chuuya down and wrapping him up again, Dazai repositioned himself in the same manner they were before relocating and slipped his hand back into Chuuya's.

Minutes passed as Dazai slowly felt his own eyes grow heavy with sleep. He struggled against the urge to give in, desperate to keep Chuuya company even if only for a minute longer, but as the minutes grew into hours, sleep claimed him as darkness fell onto his eyes.

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Morning's light hit Dazai's face, bringing him out of his sleep. Still not completely awake, Dazai rubbed his eyes with his free hand when the weight in the other caught his attention. Dread filled him to the brim. Something felt unexplainably wrong.

Chuuya's hand rested limply against his own. Dazai felt his heart drop to his stomach.

Unable to turn towards the redhead's face, Dazai spoke in a shaky voice.

"Neh Chuuya...I just had the most terrible dream...You'd slipped away while I was asleep so I didn't even get to say goodbye."

Hazelnut eyes quivered as Dazai stared at the still form next to him.

"Chuuya...This is all just a bad dream right.."

Dazai pulled himself closer and brushed his lips against Chuuya's throat, searching for any signs of life.

Skin too cold to the touch and the absence of a pulse met him.

Devastation flooded into him as if someone had suddenly released the dam that had been holding his silent emotions. Pain seared into this soul, devouring his every thought, rendering him unable to speak.

A sob wretched its way out of his throat.

As if triggering a snowball effect, tears continued to flow down Dazai's face as his grief consumed him whole. Unable to break his deeply engraved mentality of preventing himself from expressing his pain verbally, he silently screamed deep inside as hot tears slipped past his face and onto Chuuya's closed eyes.

Dazai clutched onto Chuuya's limp body, sobbing into the body's shoulders and clung onto everything Chuuya was before life so cruelly snatched him away. He stayed by Chuuya's side the whole morning and allowed his pain to wash over him relentlessly like ocean waves as grief continued to strangle his breath and thoughts, robbing him of his very sense of self.

He couldn't bring himself to speak or even alert anyone of Chuuya's passing. No words could express the degree of his suffering.

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Several weeks later

The ringing of his phone drew Dazai's attention. He had been ignoring the device since Chuuya's passing, wanting to be alone in his grief. He gave one glance at the screen with every intention of ignoring whoever was contacting him when the contact name caused him to draw closer. Surprise crept into dull amber eyes at the name flashing on the phone screen. He picked up.

"Ane-san. How rare of you to call me."

The older executive wasted no time getting straight to the point.

"Dazai, where are you right now?"

"Inside."

"Don't move Dazai, I need to speak with you."

He blinked with exhaustion. "Apologize to ane-san, but I don't wish to see anyone. Now If you'll excuse me-"

Kouyou's voice cut into his statement. "Dazai..please..I need to know."

Dazai sighed, unable to ignore the painful plea in Kouyou's voice.

"Very well ane-san, but I'm coming to you instead."

He could almost picture the graceful executive nod.

"You remember where it is?"

A ghost of a smile flashed across Dazai's face.

"How could I forget?"

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The streets were covered in snow when Dazai finally stepped out of the apartment. He hadn't bothered bringing out an umbrella which resulted in the white powder dusting his hair and lashes.

Joyful memories from his childhood flooded his mind as Dazai approached the familiar path towards Kouyou's brothel. He had visited so often he found himself automatically taking all the twists and turns leading to the building without a second thought. Dazai found himself standing before the impressive building too soon.

Kouyou greeted him at the door and motioned him with a graceful swoop of her arm. She had her pink hair down, allowing the locks to cascade down her back like rolls of silk. The executive motioned for Dazai to sit and wordlessly placed a cup of tea before him before sitting down herself.

Staring down at the teacup in her hands, Kouyou spoke in a soft voice. "How...how did he look Dazai?"

It took Dazai a while to respond. "Pale. Sick. Dead. He looked dead ane-san."

Pink eyes looked up at his face, searching for some trace of emotion.

"How did you know..."

Parted lips and a peaceful face flashed across Dazai's mind.

"His hand was too heavy against mine to be someone who was awake."

"You didn't show up to his funeral."

"I didn't realize I had to."

Despite the monotone voice, Kouyou didn't fail to pick up on the bitterness hidden deep within Dazai's answer. She gave him a sorrowful look. He chose to ignore it.

"Is that all ane-san?"

Kouyou nodded and brought her eyes back to her teacup. "Yes Dazai."

A pause filled the room before Kouyou spoke again.

"Thank you."

Dazai felt his throat constrict as his own pain threatened to devour him again. He rose from his seat.

"I'll be taking my leave then."

Concerned pink eyes stared at him, almost as if they were trying to convey words Kouyou couldn't bring herself to say.

He had already reached the door when Kouyou's voice called out to him.

"Dazai-"

The brunet stopped.

"He cared deeply for you. Even after you left."

Fingers tightened around the doorknob as Dazai forced back the grief threatening to spill over.

Stepping out, he turned back towards Kouyou and held the door slightly open.

"Ane-san," exhausted brown eyes met Kouyou's face. "I cared for him too."

Spring

Birds chirped in the trees as Dazai made his way down rows and rows of bloomed cherry trees. The pale pink petals fell down like snow with the blowing wind and coasted the path in a pink blanket of flowers. He stopped in front of one of many trees in the park.

Dazai brushed his hand against a faded carving in the bark. In teasing Chuuya about his height during their childhood, he had carved a "petite mafia" into the tree, high enough Chuuya couldn't reach to cross it out.

The memory brought a tired smile to his face. Chuuya hadn't thought to use his ability to float himself up to the carving. Instead, he had been too preoccupied with arguing with Dazai saying he would eventually grow taller than him. Dazai fondly traced over the characters with his finger. Chuuya never did end up taller than him and really did become a petite mafia. Dazai wondered if he remembered the carving when he mentioned the cherry blossom park the day they watched the sunset together.

The brunet stretched out his legs as they had gone numb from crouching so long. He pulled out a small photo framed with a simple border from inside his coat pocket and gingerly set it against the base of the tree trunk. Dazai got up and gave the photo a sad smile.

"Happy birthday Chuuya."

He stood in front of the tree for a while before giving the photo one last glance and turned his eyes towards the cherry blossoms. The spring breeze tousled his hair, and Dazai rubbed his eyes before proceeding back towards the city.

Sleep didn't come as easily as it used to.